

MINUTES OF TTF CG MEETING

To: Distribution
From: Bob Hunnicutt, Tower Coordinator, Columbia
Telecommunications

A meeting of the Telecommunications Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TTF CG) was held on January 17, 2002. The following people were in attendance:

MEMBERS

Jane Lawton OCA (240) 777-3724
Michael Ma M-NCPPC (301) 495-4595
Pat Hanehan MCPS (301) 279-3609
Eric Carzon OMB (240) 777-2763
Dave Niblock DPS (240) 777-6252
Willem Van Aller DIST (240) 777-2994
Tracey Williams WSSC (301) 206-7171
Rey Junquera DPWT (240) 777-6086

STAFF

Amy Rowan OCA (240) 777-3684
Margie Williams OCA (240) 777-3762
Robert Hunnicutt CTC (410) 964-5700
Lee Afflerbach CTC (410) 964-5700

OTHER ATTENDEES

Lee Jarmon Nextel (410) 953-7440
Bill O'Brien VoiceStream (443) 570-1032
Steve Weber VoiceStream (571) 277-0235
Jennifer Tabeling Cingular (410) 712-7835
Denise Page Cingular
Mike Winberg Resident (301) 216-9690
Wendell Jones MD-DNR (410) 260-8163
Tom Miller MD-EMS (410) 706-3668
Ed Ryan MD-DBM (410) 767-4219
Gerrit Veenhof MD-DBM (410) 767-6501
Robert Sestili MPT (410) 581-4297
Craig Fetzer MDOT (410) 747-8590
Miriam DePalmer MPT (410) 581-4033
Kirby Storms MPT (410) 581-4234
George Hughes MPT (410) 581-4024
Steven Schaffer Schwartz, Woods, Miller for MPT
Susan Singer-Bart Gazette Newspaper
Judy Daniel M-NCPPC

Discussion Item - TTF CG Website: Jane Lawton announced that a new E-Montgomery TTF CG Website had been established. She distributed information on the site and how to access it. She reported that many people make requests for tower information and this new Website should make it easier and quicker to disseminate information to the public, carriers, and other interested parties.

Action Item: Approval of December 12, 2001 minutes: Pat Hanehan moved the minutes be approved as written. Michael Ma seconded the motion and

the minutes were unanimously approved.

Action Item: VoiceStream application to replace two existing antennas with one microwave antenna at 75' and one tri-sectored omni-directional antenna at 94' on a Allegany Power Pole #MD-4697 located at 22520 Gateway Center Drive in Clarksburg (Application #200112-01).

Bob Hunnicutt summarized the application and noted that this was an antenna replacement similar to one the TTFCG recently reviewed for VoiceStream's Westmoreland Circle location. He noted that panel antennas were being replaced with a single omni-directional antenna at the top of a PEPCO pole.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended. Rey Junquera seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: VoiceStream application to replace six existing antennas with six new antennas at the same 188' level of an existing 192' lattice tower on the Ferguson Farm located at 14825 Comus Road in Clarksburg (Application #200112-02).

Bob Hunnicutt summarized the application and noted this was simply an antenna replacement at this site.

Jane Lawton asked how far this location was from the application just recommended. Willem Van Aller stated it was about three to four miles south of that location.

Motion: Willem Van Aller moved the application be recommended. Dave Niblock seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Action Item: Maryland Public Television application to construct a new 445' lattice tower on MDOT property located at the truck weigh station off southbound I-270 in Clarksburg (Application #200109-04).

Bob Hunnicutt stated that when last reviewed, the TTFCG had requested additional information from the State, which has since been submitted and reviewed by the Tower Coordinator.

Mr. Hunnicutt said that the State documents originally submitted showed a difference of 30' between the ground elevation of the proposed site in Montgomery County and the ground elevation of the existing site in Frederick County. However, at the first TTFCG review for this application, the State reported that the difference in elevation was actually closer to 80 feet. The TTFCG asked for an explanation for the difference in elevations reported. He stated that in its reply, the State noted that its initial submission was from an MPT Digital Conversion Plan which was for informational purposes only and did not provide exact elevation information. He noted that the State has since provided a letter showing the exact elevation for each site. The Tower Coordinator had verified the elevations with the State's FCC application for the sites and is now satisfied the difference between the existing Frederick site and the proposed Montgomery County site is approximately 80', a significant difference for this siting.

Mr. Hunnicutt said that the TTFCG also asked the State to report how much land it owned at the existing Frederick County site. He stated the State had replied that it owned approximately 2.75 acres in Frederick County. Mr. Hunnicutt stated he had visited the site and confirmed that the surrounding

property was comprised of a golf course, residential properties, and properties designated for residential development. He also noted that there was a small wildlife and fish area next to the tower compound.

He distributed photographs of the present site and explained that the existing tower was on the side of a low hill and there was higher elevation between the tower and Montgomery County. He stated that he did not believe that another location within the State's 2.75 acres would provide a better tower location than the site of the existing tower.

Mr. Hunnicutt stated that the third TTFCG request was for more detailed information on Montgomery County coverage from the existing Annapolis transmitter. He said the State had initially submitted RF propagation information which showed that the Annapolis transmitter already adequately served the down-county areas the new tower would cover. During the TTFCG's initial review of the application, the State had provided propagation maps which showed that the coverage, especially in the lower areas of Montgomery County, was significantly better from the proposed Montgomery County site than from the Frederick County site. The TTFCG had asked the State to provide comparable RF analysis for the Annapolis transmitter so that it could compare both locations to see the extent of coverage for Montgomery County from both transmitters.

Mr. Hunnicutt reported that the State had now submitted two versions of new RF maps for the Annapolis transmitter; one at its existing height, and one at a height 50' higher as is proposed by an extension to that location. He stated that the new RF maps submitted showed that the coverage from Annapolis was not as good as previously illustrated and was not as good as the coverage expected from the proposed Montgomery County location.

Lee Afflerbach explained that the initial submission from the State was based on an RF model that is used primarily by the FCC for allocation purposes. He noted that a recent IEEE article, which was provided in the TTFCG packet, explained that this model is nearly 50 years old and the newer integration model now submitted by the MPT engineering consultant provided a more accurate illustration of the expected coverage. He explained that in the newer models, the calculations from the transmitter are computed piece by piece to each service area point. Mr. Afflerbach noted that if the State had provided this newer information from the start, this matter would not have been an issue. He concurred that the service provided to Montgomery County from the proposed tower along I-270 would provide better coverage than is presently provided from the Annapolis transmitter at either its existing or proposed antenna heights. He added that he was concerned about this application because in locating its antennas at this site, MPT was constrained by several factors, including:

- " that they were required to use only State property;
- " that they had to locate in the particular vicinity; and
- " that the land at this site limited the tower height because of FAA requirements.

He said that a commercial broadcast station would typically look for a centrally located tower of approximately 1,000 feet in height above average terrain (HAAT). He stated that if that was the case for MPT, they could cover a much greater area because the increased height would make a significant difference in the coverage footprint. Consequently, MPT and the State are creating an underrated facility which could cost nearly as much as a taller, more typical television broadcast tower. He concluded, however, that the

State appears to be doing the best they can under the circumstances.

Ms. Lawton asked what the difference in coverage between a 1,000 foot tower and a 500 foot tower would mean to MPT's viewers. Mr. Afflerbach stated that the shorter tower would provide a weaker signal to some areas. He added that commercial operators seek to provide better coverage by maximizing the location and height of its tower.

Ms. Lawton asked if the circumstances regarding placement of this tower at this Montgomery County location for DTV purposes makes it a workable siting. Mr. Afflerbach replied that it did not make it unworkable, it was just not as good as should be expected from a commercial broadcast television station. Ms. Lawton asked if Mr. Afflerbach believed that the State would establish a tower at this location for the short term and then look for a new, taller location for improved coverage in the future. Mr. Afflerbach stated that in his opinion, given the funding for these activities by the State, it did not appear that would be the case. Robert Sestili concurred, noting that this site would be the permanent MPT transmitter location for this part of Maryland.

Michael Ma asked why this tower could not be higher than the proposed 500 feet. Mr. Afflerbach stated that the FAA limited the height of the tower due to potential conflicts with air traffic. Mr. Van Aller added that the FAA considers the flight slope pattern on approach to nearby airports and, where necessary, limits tower heights to avoid any conflicts with aircraft.

Mr. Afflerbach stated that given its limitations, the coverage at this site was better than that which could be provided by the Annapolis tower or which is currently provided by the Frederick tower. He stated that he had provided another IEEE article to the TTF CG which explained the origin of the FCC's model initially used to provide information to the TTF CG. He noted that the article points out that the model is from the 1950's and was used to determine licensing for broadcast television at that time. He noted that today, however, when one compares the picture quality that was provided in the 1950's to what is provided today, viewers' expectations are much greater. Today, the comparable picture quality is that of a much sharper, clearer picture more equivalent to a DVD-quality picture.

Dave Niblock added that he had been contacted by the County's Revenue Authority, which was interested in this application because it is located close to the Montgomery County Airpark which the County operates. He asked if the TTF CG had received written confirmation that the FAA had approved this application. Mr. Afflerbach stated that a copy of the application to the FAA was included in the TTF CG packet and the State had verified that the FAA had approved the site but limited the tower height to 500 feet.

A fourth request by the TTF CG was related to questions about the State's leases raised by carriers at the last TTF CG meeting. Mr. Hunnicutt explained that a number of the carriers had reported that even though the State claimed this new tower would provide co-location opportunities for other carriers, it would most likely not be used by carriers for that purpose because the State's contracting process is so cumbersome. The carriers agreed that it would be easier to seek other sites than to deal with the State to co-locate on its towers. Mr. Hunnicutt stated that the TTF CG had requested that the State respond to those comments. He noted that although the State did not provide information in advance of today's meeting, they were prepared to answer questions at this meeting. Mr. Hunnicutt then asked Ed Ryan to respond to this issue.

Mr. Ryan stated that the State's contracting process was created by Maryland law which required specific time periods for the State to approve use of any State property, building, or tower. He said the process requires advertising for a certain period and a review by a Legislative Committee. He added that the agreement, once negotiated, had to be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Public Works. He noted that he understood that the time periods for this process as presently prescribed in law were problematic for the carriers. He said that the typical processing time for a State agreement for a cell carrier co-location was 8 months from start to finish. But, he noted despite the long process, they still had a number of carriers which had attached to State facilities.

Jane Lawton asked how many applicants had gone through that process. Mr. Ryan replied that approximately 30-40 agreements had been reviewed from 7 different carriers. Ms. Lawton asked if there had been any attempt to make changes to simplify the process. Mr. Ryan stated there had been several unsuccessful attempts in the past but that they would try again this year, particularly for cases of co-locating on existing towers. He stated they would also try to seek a blanket approval from the Board of Public Works for agreements up to \$200,000. He noted that currently, regardless of its nature, any lease must go through this approval process.

Pat Hanehan asked how much the State was seeking from carriers for lease agreements. Mr. Ryan replied that there was a formula used to compute the lease amount based on the type of carrier, the different types and numbers of antennas, the traffic density, and the related ground space needed for equipment. In response to questions regarding the State's monopole on Montrose Road, Craig Fetzer stated that the average rent at that site was approximately \$2,800 per month. Mr. Fetzer noted that in considering each lease, the State had to consider other uses in the public highway area and the impact on other existing utilities. He stated they were trying to streamline the process, especially for attaching to existing structures.

Ms. Lawton offered that the TTFCG is available to assist the State in developing creative solutions to streamline its process, and noted that the process in Montgomery County was very effective and successful.

Mr. Van Aller noted that communications between the State and the County could also be improved as well, and cited recent work to approve extensions to several towers in the County as an example of the problem. He said that the State attorneys worked with the County attorney but that they did not communicate with the engineers or with the TTFCG regarding those tower height extensions. Mr. Ryan noted that Mr. Van Aller was referring to the Memos of Understanding that were negotiated between the County and the State, and agreed that was a communication primarily between the attorneys and not the engineers or the users of the tower facilities. Mr. Ryan stated he would be happy to work on improving communications if the County could provide a point of contact. Ms. Lawton stated that the Tower Coordinator should be the point of contact for the TTFCG.

Lee Jarmon stated that the biggest problem Nextel has had with the State was that there was a very short notice required to vacate the tower. This put Nextel at considerable risk in attaching to State facilities. Mr. Ryan replied that the normal vacate requirement for State agreements was 180 days. He added that changes to the present process would have to be made by the State Legislature.

Michael Ma asked if the Park Police would have to go through the same

process if they wanted to place their antennas on the State's tower. Mr. Ryan replied that there is no charge for local governments or law enforcement agencies to attach to State facilities and the only requirement was an inter-governmental agreement.

Ms. Lawton asked if any of the other members or visitors in attendance had any questions regarding the State's application. There was no response from any of the attendees. Ms. Lawton summarized the review of this application and noted that the TTFCG and the Tower Coordinator had thoroughly reviewed the technical aspects of this application and had examined possibilities for co-location in order to minimize any adverse impact on the community. She noted that the Tower Coordinator now recommended this application and that it would next go to Mandatory Referral, where the Board would hear public comments and address the land use issues. She asked if a date had been set for the Mandatory Referral hearing. Judy Daniel stated that no date had been set as they were still waiting for the State to provide a complete site plan. Ms. Lawton asked what notification would be provided by the M-NCPPC about the Mandatory Referral hearing. Ms. Daniel replied that there would be public notice but she was not sure of the extent of that notice.

Motion: Eric Carzon moved the application be recommended. Pat Hanehan seconded the motion and it was approved with Willem Van Aller abstaining.

Discussion Item - Kenwood Country Club Tower Capacity follow-up: Mr. Hunnicutt reminded the group that they had asked him to find out how many carriers the new County tower at Kenwood County Club would be able to accommodate. He stated that the tower builder had advised him that 5 additional carriers could be accommodated on the lattice tower once it was constructed. This would be in addition to those carriers already slated to attach to the new tower from their current location on the old tower at this site.

The next meeting of the TTFCG is scheduled for Wednesday, February 13, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room #225 of the COB.

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